IFPRI MALAWI

Quarterly Market Report

Report No. 2 for Selected Legumes, Roots, Tubers, and Other Cereals, January to March 2021

This quarterly market report was developed by researchers at IFPRI Malawi with the goal of providing clear and accurate information on the variation of weekly and monthly retail prices of selected agricultural commodities that are important for food security and nutrition in Malawi. The reports are intended as a resource for those interested in agricultural markets in Malawi.

Highlights

- *Average retail prices of common beans increased by 9 percent in the Northern region and 3 percent in the Central region but decreased by 7 percent in the South during the first quarter of 2021.*
- *Groundnut prices decreased in all the regions by 4 to 8 percent during the quarter while soyabean prices remained constant in the Center and South and increased by 4 percent in the North. Pigeon pea prices increased by 13 percent in the North but decreased by 17 percent in the South.*
- *Average retail prices of cassava and Irish potato decreased by 12 to 36 percent in the North and the South but increased by 8 to 15 percent in the Central region.*
- *Rice retail prices dropped sharply in the first week of March, while sorghum price began to decline in the third week of March.*

Legumes

Table 1 presents the regional average retail prices of legumes during the first quarter of 2021. Retail prices (MWK/kg) of common bean increased by 9 percent and 3 percent in the North and the Center respectively but decreased by 7 percent in the South.

Groundnut prices decreased in all the regions by 4 to 8 percent. While increasing by 4 percent in the North, soyabean retail prices remained constant in Central and Southern regions.

Pigeon pea prices decreased by 17 percent in the South, while increasing by 13 percent in the North. Pigeon pea exports have significantly declined since import restrictions were imposed by India in 2016.

Table 1. Legume retail prices (MWK/unit) by region

	Jan	Feb	March		Percentage change (Jan-March)
Legumes					
Common beans					
North	950	1029	1031	↑	9%
Center	1100	1117	1133	↑	3%
South	1170	1170	1090	↓	-7%
Pigeon peas					
North	563	638	-	↑	13%
Center					
South	621	670	517	↓	-17%
Soybean					
North	423	442	442	↑	4%
Center	428	428	428	→	0%
South	483	483	483	→	0%
Groundnut					
North	1000	983	950	↓	-5%
Center	1000	988	958	↓	-4%
South	1150	1156	1053	↓	-8%
All markets	808	828	809	↑	0.1%

Note: Number of markets monitored: common bean = 9; pigeon pea = 5; sorghum = 9; groundnut = 9; -= commodity not monitored

Roots and Tubers

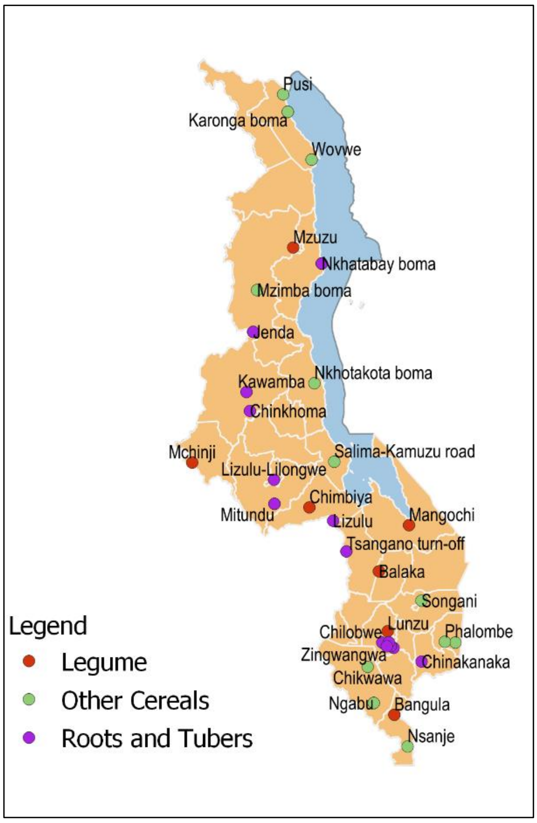
Table 2 presents the average retail prices for roots and tubers for the first three months. of 2021.Prices of roots and tubers dropped sharply between January and February due to harvesting of mature and immature tubers. Over the quarter, average retail prices of cassava and Irish potato decreased by 12 to 36 percent in the North and the South but increased by 8 to 15 percent in the Central region. Sweet potato prices were only monitored in the Southern region, where they declined slightly.

Table 2. Root and tuber prices (MWK/unit) by region

	Jan	Feb	March		Percentage change (Jan-March)
Roots and tubers					
Cassava					
North	277	256	245	↓	-12%
Center	320	302	367	↑	15%
South	379	302	242	↓	-36%
Irish potato					
North	455	485	373	↓	-18%
Center	373	493	403	↑	8%
South	508	565	400	↓	-21%
Sweet potato					
South	311	315	307	↓	-1%

Note: Cassava and Irish potato are being priced per kilogram; sweet potatoes are priced per heap; number of markets monitored: cassava = 6; Irish potato = 5

Figure 1. Location of markets by commodity

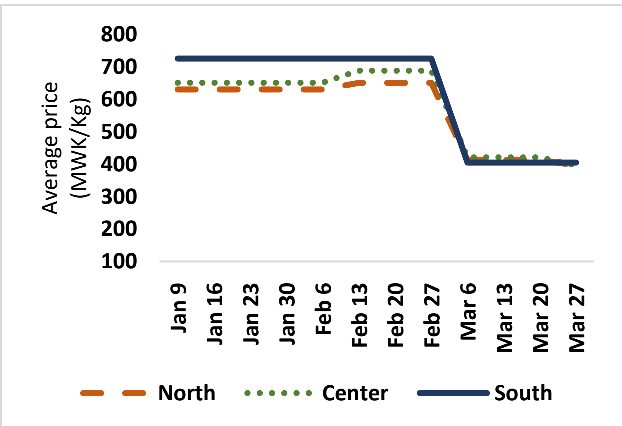


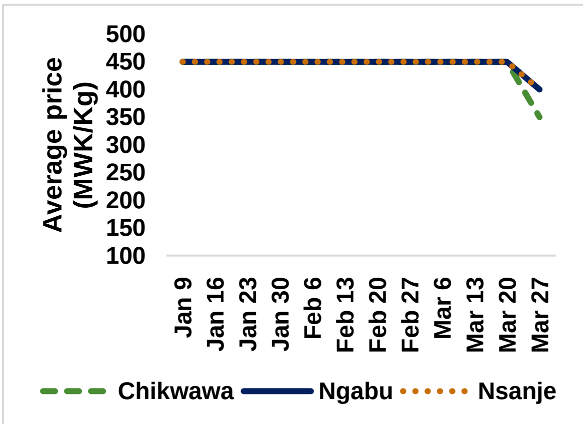
Other Cereals

Average retail prices of rice were stable, and higher in the South than in the other two regions in the first two months of the quarter as shown in Figure 2. However, in the first week of March, rice retail prices dropped sharply and then remained stable for rest of the quarter, as the main harvest season for the alternative cereal (maize) had just begun. By the end of the quarter, rice prices in the South were slightly higher at MWK 405/kg than in the North and Center.

Sorghum prices were constant and uniform in the first two and a half months of the quarter in all markets monitored. However, from third week of March, sorghum retail prices started declining, falling more in Chikwawa than in the other two markets.

Figure 2. Average retail prices (MWK/kg) of rice and sorghum





How data were collected

With financial support from the European Union, IFPRI Malawi began monitoring retail prices of selected legumes, roots and tubers, and non-maize cereals* in selected markets in October 2020. Currently, prices are collected from 44 markets across the country, with monitoring occurring once per week. Three monitors report prices from each market using an automated short message service (SMS), with follow-ups made by telephone the next day if needed. Note that the number of markets monitored vary by commodity because major markets are targeted in areas where these commodities are widely produced.

* daily retail prices for maize are available from our *monthly maize market reports*

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